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A

LETTER

TO THE

Rev. *Dr. Rutherforth*,

ARCHDEACON of ESSEX, &c. &c.

Occaſioned by his

SECOND VINDICATION

Of the Right of

PROTESTANT CHURCHES

TO

Require the CLERGY to SUBSCRIBE

TO AN

ESTABLISHED CONFESSION

OF

FAITH and DOCTRINES.

From the EXAMINER of the FIRST.

Cui tua non odium, vel cui portenta cachinnum
Non moveant poſthàc, is mihi prodigium eſt.
POP. COUR.

Other foundation can no man lay, than that is laid.
ST. PAUL.

The SECOND EDITION.

LONDON.

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M. DCC. LXVII.

LETTER

TO THE

Rev. Dr. Rutherforth.

SIR,

THE

A

LETTER

TO THE

Rev. *Dr. Rutherforth.*

SIR,

THE manner in which you have conducted your SECOND VINDICATION can only be looked upon as calculated to draw me into that diſgraceful ſituation in which I have ſometimes ſeen an honeſt, fair, and, in the beginning, ſucceſsful, diſputant at laſt involved. The victor, young and impatient in the advantageous poſt already gained, is tempted to quit it and follow the enemy through thoſe intricate defiles in which, driven from the field, he ſeeks to ſecure himſelf; hoping no longer indeed to atchieve glory, but, how-

ever, to tarniſh the victor's, if he can draw him into danger and diſgrace. — Bear with me, Sir, if the alluſion has a caſt of vanity. But I do think the EXAMINER has hitherto fought fair, met the VINDICATOR in open field, and, if he muſt not ſay, *driven him off*, yet, that his antagoniſt has *quitted*, the field, and would provoke the battle from a diſtant quarter. — To drop the metaphor.

I HAVE examined your firſt VINDICATION, as to the force and tendency of the argument contained therein, without once, to my knowledge, deviating from the ſubject to caſt a perſonal reflection, or officiouſly and unfriendly to intrude into the queſtion between you and the writer of the CONFESSIONAL. This gave me the reaſonable hope, that I ſhould find the VINDICATOR, if the honour of his remarks might be expected, keeping equally clear of ungenteel reflection, and the queſtion unembarraſſed with ſuch impertinent and foreign ſtrictures, as I had carefully avoided. — But I am diſappointed. — The queſtion

is,

is, for the moſt part, involved in a miſt of diſingenuous inſinuations, treated without any order, ſometimes evaded, at other times ſhifted.

WHAT muſt be done in this awkward ſituation? — To anſwer your letter will hardly be to touch on the ſubject firſt engaged in. Do you expect, that I ſhould attempt to develope the queſtion from the cloud of obſcurity which now covers it; and patiently and painfully anſwer one by one your objections to, or rather ſtrictures upon, the EXAMINATION? — What a laborious taſk have you ſet me! And, of what patience muſt you ſuppoſe our readers to be poſſeſſed, to expect their attendance upon us through this clumſy proceſs of *vindicating* and *examining* to the end, could they hope ever to ſee it ended? — This muſt not be attempted. Let us have mercy on our readers, whatever becomes of the diſpute, and our own reputations in managing it. Silence, after the queſtion has received, from the ſecond VINDICATI-

on, ſo different an aſpect from what it had in the firſt, would perhaps be the moſt prudent for both ſides. It appears, however, moſt eligible to me, and what I ſhould certainly have obſerved, for my own part, could I have poſſibly diſpenſed with returning, by one anſwer at leaſt, the reſpect ſhewn me in your conſidering my performance, though *unimportant* in itſelf, of conſequence *enough* to induce you to begin the correſpondence.

You ſet out with complaining, that I make no reply to the latter of your arguments brought in ſupport of your firſt VINDICATION "from the commands given by "St. PAUL to TIMOTHY and TITUS to "take care, that thoſe whom they appointed paſtors and teachers, ſhould be ſuch "as held faſt the faithful word agreeably to "what they had been taught, the myſtery "of the faith in a pure conſcience *". — There was no occaſion for the complaint.

* 2 Vindication, page 1.

The

The omiſſion could not wrong the argument. If it had much force, you was left in full poſſeſſion of it; and leſs work was cut out for you, being called upon to defend one inſtead of both your arguments.

BUT I make no reply; "and yet, you "ſay, the right is the ſame, and the tenden-"cy of it is the ſame, by whichever of the "two it is proved." — One would think, Sir, you was apologizing for, not blaming, me; that I omitted taking notice of this latter argument. For, if "the right is the "ſame and the tendency of it the ſame, "by whichever of the arguments it is prov-"ed," where was the neceſſity of examining both? — If *one* of your arguments has been refuted and the ſcandalous tendency of it fully expoſed, then the right which you contend for, has been diſproved, no leſs effectually, than if I had refuted your *other* argument, ſince "the right is the "ſame — by *whichever* of the arguments "it is proved."

You

You very gravely, however, call upon me to conſider, what I have done by *omitting* this argument, and *committing* the other to examination. "If our readers, you "ſay, for want of your help ſhould be "convinced by the precepts of St. PAUL on "the one hand, that this right belongs to "church-governours, and by your reaſon-"ings on the other, that ſuch a right is in-"conſiſtent with the true principles of the "reformation; you leave them to con-"clude, that the principles of the reform-"ation are inconſiſtent with the authority "of the apoſtle *." — But take heart, Sir. If our readers are convinced, that I have, on the principles of the reformation, fully refuted one of your arguments for the right in queſtion, they will hardly think, that your other argument for it can reſt on ſcripture-principles. By omitting, therefore, to examine the argument you frame on the words of St. PAUL, after having convinced our readers, that your claim cannot be ad-

* 2 Vind. p. 1, 2.

mitted

mitted but on popiſh principles, I leave them to conclude, not, "that the princi-"ples of the reformation are inconſiſtent "with the authority of the apoſtle," but, that you muſt certainly have miſtaken the apoſtle.

AND now, Sir, conſider coolly with your-ſelf, ſeeing there is ſo little danger from the omiſſion, of our readers' forming a conclu-ſion that would be unfavourable to the prin-ciples of the reformation, and ſo little harm done thereby to yourſelf, whether I deſerved for it the ſevere animadverſion which you have thought proper to make upon me in the following terms: "You muſt have read "the diſcourſe which you undertake to ex-"amine, very careleſſly, if you overlooked "this argument, and you muſt be very ill "qualified for the office of an EXAMINER, "if you did not ſee the force of it to prove "the right in queſtion, for which purpoſe "I produced it*." — The perſonal reflect-

* 2 Vind. p. 12.

ion,

ion, Sir, upon my abilities, is beſt anſwered by perfect ſilence; and, however juſt it may be, would have come better from any one elſe, than the perſon, whoſe judgment on that head cannot, with decency, anticipate the deciſion of the public.

As to the charge of careleſſneſs in peruſing your book, I cannot help thinking, that you are very ſenſible I muſt have read it with great care: But, however that be, my omitting to conſider St. PAUL's direction concerning deacons did not proceed from careleſſneſs, but was owing to the manifeſt impertinency of the quotation, with reference to the point in queſtion. It never occurred to me, that you could mean it for another direct argument in ſupport of the right contended for, but only as one of your ſtrictures upon the CONFESSIONAL; with which, therefore, I had no farther concern, than as it might tend to illuſtrate the nature of your argument *. And as ſuch, Sir, let me remind you, that this paſſage

* Examination, p. 3.

from

from St. PAUL, to which you now give the name of *another argument*, is taken notice of in the EXAMINATION. You will find it in the tenth page, referred to in order to ſhew your ſentiments on the article of ſubſcription, in general, to revealed truth; as follows: "This is deemed by the PRO-"FESSOR very inſufficient to ſatisfy church-"governours in our days, which was ſo "unlikely to ſatisfy TIMOTHY or TITUS, "that they, who made it *, were found in "the faith."

THIS was done, and this was all that appeared to be neceſſary, and to my purpoſe, as an examiner of your ſentiments on the ſubject. What think you now, Sir? — Who is the careleſs reader? — Or how came this to be overlooked? — TIMOTHY and TITUS ſtood forth in large characters. To ſtrike the VINDICATOR's attention there was

* Solemn declaration of their belief in ſcripture as the word of GOD.

not wanting that typographical *feſcue*, the ſparing uſe of which in the CHARGE is by you ſuppoſed * to occaſion miſtakes and omiſſions in the EXAMINER.

BUT do you really chuſe, Sir, that this quotation from St. PAUL ſhould be conſidered as *another* argument in ſupport of the right contended for? — It is wonderful you ſhould chuſe it. For it is not ſo much *beſide* your purpoſe, as it is palpably *oppoſite* thereto. It would not have ſurpriſed me ſo much, if the writer of the CONFESSIONAL had quoted it in ſupport of *his* opinion. Let us ſee, however, if (allowing your own conſtruction of the apoſtle's deſign, and every one of thoſe circumſtances in this paſſage of which you would avail yourſelf) it has, after all, the leaſt ſemblance of favour for your ſide of the queſtion.

* 2 Vind. p. 4.

THE

THE apoſtle writes thus to TIMOTHY *: *Likewiſe muſt the deacons be grave —holding the myſtery of the faith in a pure conſcience.* — This you call a *command* from the apoſtle to TIMOTHY. The occaſion of it you ſuppoſe to be the *ordination* of deacons; whom you further ſuppoſe to be the ſame with *paſtors* and *teachers*.

Now, admitting theſe circumſtances in your favour, each of which might, conſiſtently with the rules of juſt criticiſm, be diſputed with you, how does it appear, that you have the authority of this apoſtle for that claim of church-power, in matters of faith and conſcience, which you undertake to vindicate? — It has appeared, that you contend for a ſubſcription to *ſuch* a confeſſion as church-governours ſhall pleaſe to enjoin †; that the governours of every particular church have a right to enjoin ſubſcription, not only to the ſcriptures in general, or to the moſt particular tenets conceiv-

* 1 Tim. iii. 9. † Exam. p. 13.

ed

ed in ſcripture terms, but to *any* confeſſion of faith *they* ſhall judge to be ſcriptural *; and you even reject ſcripture-terms and expreſſions, as improper and inadequate to the purpoſe of ſubſcription †.

COMPARE now the apoſtolic command, ſuppoſed to refer to the ordination of paſtors and teachers, with your ſentiments on the ſame ſubject. — *Likewiſe muſt the deacons be grave, &c. — holding the myſtery of the faith in a pure conſcience.* — Do theſe words countenance your opinion? — Doth St. PAUL command, or even recommend to TIMOTHY, to exerciſe any ſuch arbitrary and inquiſitorial authority over thoſe, whom he ſhould appoint paſtors and teachers, as you contend for? — Far from it. Not one *particular* point of faith is here ſpecified, as a neceſſary article to be *ſubſcribed*, or ſolemnly declared (for I acknowledge no greater difference between the two than you do) by the candidate, for his admiſſion

* Exam. p. 11, 12. † Exam. p. 12, 13. Charge, p. 11.

to

to holy orders. The direction is conceived in the moſt *general* terms, as general as your opponents themſelves can deſire. Do you really know, Mr. PROFESSOR, of any one ſo great a latitudinarian in the article of ſubſcription, that he would not willingly ſubmit to be ſo reaſonably queſtioned concerning his faith? — Does the writer of the CONFESSIONAL himſelf plead, in the caſe of ſubſcription, for more liberty than TIMOTHY was warranted to grant to thoſe under his examination for holy orders? — I think not, Sir. But, as I chuſe not to be anſwerable for any man's opinion on this ſubject but my own, ſo I affect not the honour of giving my aſſiſtance to that gentleman who needs it not: *Non tali auxilio.* — I anſwer for myſelf; that you could not have pitched upon a paſſage leſs likely to ſerve your cauſe.

HOWEVER, you think not ſo. To you it appears full and deciſive in your favour. "It is enough for us, ſay you, to find that "St. PAUL — gave TIMOTHY and TITUS "no

"no directions to uſe *only* ſcripture-lan-
"guage *." — Enough, Sir! — Enough for what? — Is it enough to ſatisfy us of the propriety of forming confeſſions in language *unſcriptural?* or, of the right to require the ſame to be ſubſcribed by the clergy, and to ſet them forth to the laity, as what they are *bound* in conſcience to believe † — every one of the articles in the ſenſe, and no other, fixed upon it by church-governours — fixed, not by means of the words of CHRIST and his apoſtles, which might lead them to believe it in a different ſenſe, but by means of unſcriptural terms and expreſſions, as more preciſely conveying the ſenſe of the church-governours ‡, who underſtand them to be *bound* in conſcience to believe it as they have it ſet forth? — Is this all you have to offer from ſcripture for your mode of confeſſion? — Is the ſilence itſelf of the apoſtle about it a

* Charge, p. 10.
† Charge, p. 14. Exam. p. 25, 26.
‡ Charge, p. 11. Exam. p. 15, 16.

proof,

proof, that it is *ſcriptural?* — Call not this *indignant exclamation* *. I am at a loſs to expreſs my own aſtoniſhment at, and to excite your attention to, the futility of your argument.

YOU may, perhaps, be allowed "to "conclude from hence, that TIMOTHY "and TITUS were left at liberty to pro- "poſe their queſtions in any words, which "would aſcertain *their* meaning †." But what of this? — Ought you to conclude, that they thought themſelves at liberty to queſtion their candidates in terms and expreſſions *ill* adapted to aſcertain the meaning of *ſcripture?* — Would they be juſtified, as acting agreeably to the apoſtle's command, if they had taken upon themſelves to try the faith of the candidates by articles drawn up in *ſuch* terms as, how preciſely ſoever they might convey their *own* meaning, might miſlead them from the true *ſcriptural* ſenſe? — Surely not. They

* 2 Vind. p. 4. † Charge, p. 10.

would

would think themſelves obliged to propoſe nothing, as a teſt of orthodoxy, that was not *certainly* and *manifeſtly* ſuch. In ſhort, if they thought themſelves at liberty "to "propoſe their queſtions in any words, "which would aſcertain *their* meaning," they would firſt be *ſure*, that *their* meaning was the meaning of *ſcripture*. They would not inſiſt upon any *doubtful* points or abſtruſe ſpeculations, ſuch as might perplex, or be differently underſtood by, ſincere believers, and, perhaps, miſtaken by themſelves; they would not do this, and then excuſe or juſtify their having required the aſſent and conſent of the candidates to an erroneous article of faith, by ſaying that the articles propoſed were all ſcriptural, according to the beſt of *their* judgement. They had no commiſſion from the apoſtle, at leaſt, that appears in the paſſage under conſideration, to propoſe any articles of faith, of the truth of which they could not be *certain*, or even to propoſe any queſtions whatſoever, more than were ſufficient to convince them that the candidates were

ſincere

ſincere in their profeſſing chriſtianity, or (to come nearer to the point) to require more "than a ſolemn declaration on the part of "teachers and paſtors, that they received "the ſcriptures as the word of GOD, and "would, in a pure conſcience inſtruct the "people out of them*."

BUT allowing, that theſe primitive church-governours might exerciſe more authority in their examination of candidates than this comes to; yet how far ſhort muſt it have been of *that* authority which you vindicate in behalf of church-governours in our days! — You contend, that the governours of every particular church have a right to require ſubſcription to any confeſſion of faith that is ſcriptural in *their* judgement; to reject as inſufficient for the miniſtry †, ſuch as deſire to be employed therein, but cannot conſcienciouſly ſubſcribe to every article in the ſenſe fixed upon it by fallible men, and to eject out of that office

* Confeſſional, p. 16. † Exam. p. 10, 11. 20, 21.

any miniſters that may be teaching the people "the myſtery of the faith in a *pure* "*conſcience*," though in a ſenſe, on ſome parts thereof, different from that fixed in the eſtabliſhed confeſſion. — Hard lot for theſe conſciencious perſons under either predicament! — In one caſe, to be *refuſed* "the benefit of ſubſcription" and forced to "apply themſelves to *ſome other way* of get-"ting a livelihood *!" — In the other caſe, to be *deprived* of the benefit and forced to *quit the way*, in which they ſee ſome getting no bad livelihood! — But you will find nothing of this kind, no ſuch inquiſitorial authority delegated to TIMOTHY, nor ſuch bitter effects of it overtaking either the candidates or the miniſters within his dioceſe and juſtified by this command of the apoſtle; *The deacons muſt be grave, &c. — holding the myſtery of the faith in a* PURE CONSCIENCE.

I HAVE conſidered this text, Sir, in your own view and acceptation of it, and it appears quite foreign to your purpoſe. I could further make it appear, that you are miſtak-

* Charge, p. 5.

en

en in your acceptation of it. But, from what has been ſaid, you are left to judge, whether the omiſſion you complain of was deſigned to evade the *force* of what you call your *ſecond argument* founded on this paſſage.

THE next reflection you make on the EXAMINER is of a very different kind from the foregoing. I have no ſooner exculpated myſelf from the charge of groſs negligence or a wilful omiſſion, than I am to anſwer to the charge of taking too much pains. I am told, that I have ſpent *eight* pages in enquiring into a diſtinction you made, when a "*little* attention would have ſaved me this "trouble*." — But, Sir, if I had ſaved myſelf this trouble, in the way you ſpeak of, by giving but a *little* attention, inſtead of *carefully* attending to your manner of expreſſion and enquiring into the *force* of your words, leſt I ſhould miſtake your meaning, ſhould I not have fallen under the other charge of *negligence* and *omiſſion*? —You would then, probably, have told me, that "I muſt have "read your diſcourſe very *careleſſly* to over-

* 2 Vind. p. 2.

"look

"look this *diſtinction*; and that I muſt be "very ill qualified for the office of an Ex-"AMINER, if I did not ſee the *force* of it*." To ſee the force of it, I own, exceeded my penetration. But I did my beſt endeavour to ſee it: and, as the trouble I gave myſelf was entirely in your favour, *viz.* to prevent a miſrepreſentation of your meaning, ſo you might have more kindly accepted my well-meant, though fruitleſs, attempt.

BUT, beſides this ingenuous acknowledgement of my want of ſufficient ſagacity in this matter, our readers ſhall be acquainted with the diſtinction which occaſioned my embarraſſment. It is but reaſonable they ſhould know, how much the confuſed EXAMINER is indebted to the VINDICATOR for his very dextrous ſolution of the difficulty.

"GIVE me leave, you kindly ſay, to clear "up a difficulty which embarraſſes you for

* 2 Vind. p. 12.

"eight

"eight pages together. They are ſpent in "enquiring, how I mean to diſtinguiſh, "where I ſay, that † *church-governours* "*have introduced new and unſcriptural* "*words and exppreſſions into eſtabliſhed con-*"*feſſions*, not to *fix the ſenſe of ſcripture-*"*doctrines*, but to *fix the ſenſe in which* "*ſcripture-expreſſions are underſtood by the* "*candidates for the office of public teaching*: "A little attention, you continue, would "have ſaved you this trouble, and have "ſhewn you, that the diſtinction is rather "*verbal* than *real*." — Curious ſolution! — But could you blame me, Sir, for expecting from the *Regius* PROFESSOR of the univerſity of *Cambridge*, a diſtinction rather *real* than *verbal*? — Such an one was expected, I can aſſure you, from Dr. RUTHERFORTH. But I was miſtaken. "This "was the whole myſtery."— The diſtinction, all the while I was engaged in ſearching out its *real* force, had none, or not much. It was rather *verbal* than *real*.

† Charge, p. 11.

You

"You now think it time to come to the points in queſtion between us: And yet what you do here is little more than to repeat the EXAMINER's obſervations; and this, very confuſedly and inaccurately; ſo that it is not eaſy to follow you and give the reader an idea of what you mean, without treſpaſſing upon his patience, and exerciſing my own to a degree, to which even my great reſpect for any thing that comes from you, is not ſufficient to carry me. Could I find in this ſecond VINDICATION any one thing directly offered to invalidate my remarks on the force and tendency of your argument, I would paſs over all the reſt and come immediately to that. But, inſtead of attempting a manly defence againſt the charge of reaſoning on the deteſtable principles of popery, and thus ſupporting in its proper dignity the character of VINDICATOR, which you have aſſumed, you content yourſelf with picking out, puerile employment! any thing that you fancy will derogate from the authorſhip of the EXAMINER.

"BUT

"BUT I must take your performance as "I find it."— I had obſerved, that the right which you undertook to vindicate, whatever it ſhould appear to be on examination, was not by your argument confined to *proteſtant* churches, but belonged equally to the *church of Rome*. Leſt the reader ſhould be prejudiced againſt your argument on *that* account, before the merits of it had been tried by an enquiry into its nature and tendency, I obſerved, that this was not *of itſelf* "a ſufficient reaſon why a proteſtant ſhould "refuſe to admit *it* any more than the moſt "allowed claim which that church makes "in common with all proteſtant churches". —But, ſee the return made me for this piece of candour! I am repreſented as hereby confeſſing, that this obſervation, on the claim belonging to the *church of Rome*, is "*nothing to the purpoſe**." Strange, Sir, that candour itſelf ſhould be thus treated by you! Is ſuch a return for endeavouring to prevent any prejudice being conceiv-

* 2 Vind. p. 2.

ed

ed againſt you, the encouragement you give your antagoniſt to continue the fair method of diſcuſſing the queſtion, in which he ſet out, and which he has hitherto preſerved?—But, Sir, though I am thus tempted, I am not to be prevailed upon, by the ill uſage, to return it otherwiſe, than by demonſtrating and expoſing your unfairneſs; nor this needleſſly, and in every inſtance (that would be endleſs) but only, where to do it is conſiſtent with the juſtice I owe myſelf. To expoſe your unfairneſs in the preſent inſtance I will give myſelf the trouble to tranſcribe the paſſage and particularize thoſe circumſtances in it, which are levelled ſo unmercifully at my credit as an EXAMINER. In return, however, for which trouble to myſelf and tax upon the patience of our readers, it is expected, you will be ſo reaſonable, as to excuſe my *omitting* to take notice of ſeveral other inſtances of the like nature; at leaſt, in ſo particular and full a manner as I ſhall this.

YOUR

YOUR words on the occaſion are: "Having thus *confeſſed* the *ſingle* obſervation, "which you make on the tendency of my "argument, to be *nothing to the purpoſe*; "you repeat it, that your readers may be "ſure to remember it; and then, *taking* "*leave* of the ſubject, you *go on* to enquire "into the tendency of *my* reaſonings on the "nature and extent of the right itſelf, not "as proved by this particular argument, "which you undertake to examine, but by "this, or by any other argument whatſo-"ever*."

LET us now mark the truth, candour, conſiſtency and perſpicuity of this repreſentation. Firſt, for the *confeſſion* which I am here ſaid to make, *viz.* that my obſervation on the tendency of your argument is *nothing to the purpoſe*. Can you hope, Sir, that your moſt partial readers will believe you, when you tell them, that I make *ſuch* a confeſſion? — If they have never read the

* 2 Vind. p. 5.

Examiner, and are ever ſo much inclined to take your word in your own cauſe, yet they muſt heſitate here. They will never believe, were it only for their partiality towards yourſelf, Sir, that a man of your abilities and eminence would have undertaken to write a ſerious anſwer to one, who had *confeſſed*, "that the ſingle obſervation, "which he made on the tendency of your "argument, was *nothing to the purpoſe*."

By this, however, you might mean only to perſuade your readers, that the obſervation made was really *nothing to the purpoſe*. If you would have them think ſo, I muſt do myſelf the juſtice to ſhew them, that it was quite *to my purpoſe*.

The Examiner had remarked, that, from the *profeſſed* deſign of your performance, we ſhould expect to find the Vindication limited to the governours of *proteſtant* churches; — but that, throughout the argument, we have no ſight of *ſuch limitation*. It was not only remarked. The

argument

argument itſelf was produced, examined, and ſhewn, as it ſhould ſeem, to your own ſatisfaction, not to be limited to the defence of our own or any other *proteſtant* church, but equally to juſtify the church of *Rome* in claiming the right in queſtion. And was this *nothing to the purpoſe?* — Will you ſo tamely give up, that your intention was to vindicate ſubſcription on the foot of *proteſtantiſm?* — Why then, in laying down your deſign, did you lead us to expect, that you intended to defend it on that footing, by calling it a "right, which the governours of "*our own*, or of any other *proteſtant* church "have, &c *?"— If it was not your intention to reſtrict the argument, in favour of ſubſcription, to *proteſtant* churches, it was *beſide your purpoſe* to mention them particularly; and the whole deſign of your VINDICATION was *nothing to the purpoſe*: Since "the writer †, who led you to employ "your thoughts on the ſubject of ſubſcrip-"tion" no where denies, that the right

* Charge, p. 1. † Ibid. p. 6.

you

you contend for may be vindicated upon *certain* principles, *viz. popiſh* principles; but only, its conſiſtency with thoſe of the *reformation*. On the other hand; if you did intend (as I hoped and was willing to believe you did) to argue for the conſiſtency of the right with the principles of *proteſtants*, then it certainly was *to my purpoſe*, to ſhew, that you had miſſed of *your's*; that your argument was ſo framed as not to anſwer your *purpoſe*, which was to vindicate *our* church, or any other *proteſtant* church, as ſuch.

BUT, to proceed to another circumſtance in this ſame paſſage. You repreſent the obſervation above-mentioned, not only, as *nothing to the purpoſe*, but as "the *ſingle* "obſervation, which I make on the tenden-"cy of your argument." — I am ſorry for it, Mr. PROFESSOR; but you oblige me to appear ſomething rude in contradicting you. For, beſides obſerving, that your argument, admitting its validity, proved the right in queſtion to belong as much to the church

of

of *Rome* as to *proteſtant* churches, I enquired into the nature and extent of the right claimed, and then made the following *obſervations, viz.* "that the right you contend "for is *unlimitted* in its extent; that the "principles on which you have reaſoned, "juſtify the claim of the church of *Rome*, "in every thing that ſhe requires of her cler-"gy; and, that the miniſters and paſtors "of every other church exerciſe that office "unwarrantably; or elſe, that this general "right contended for is altogether *inſigni-"ficant*, without *meaning* and *effect* *." — See, Sir, the tendency of your argument afreſh expoſed! Before expoſed, from a real concern for the advantage ſuch reaſoning might give the papiſt againſt our common cauſe, as *proteſtants*: Now expoſed, in my own defence, againſt your unfair dealing! — At neither time, aſſure yourſelf, by way of *perſonal reflection.*

BUT indeed your own words in the paſſage under examination (if any ſenſe can be

* Examination, p. 32.

made

made out of them) are againſt you. For you ſay (with what conſiſtency be your own friends the judges) that, "*taking leave* of the ſub-"ject, I *go on* to enquire into the tendency "of your reaſonings." This is very darkly expreſſed, to be ſure; and, therefore, it doth not become me to be any farther poſitive of the implication of your words, than that, if they have any meaning, they ſeem to contradict what you had before ſaid.

I HAVE not done with the ſentence yet. —You ſay, that I "go on to enquire into "the tendency of *your* reaſonings on the "nature and extent of the right itſelf." —*Your* reaſonings on the nature and extent of the right! I do not remember that there are any ſuch throughout the VINDICATION. It was not *you* that had reaſoned "on the "nature and extent of the right" in queſtion. You quite confound the method of the VINDICATION with that of the EXAMINATION. It was the EXAMINER that took this method of enquiring into the nature and extent of the right, which you had undertaken to vin-

dicate;

dicate; in other words, I examined in what *extent* you had actually aſſerted it, that I might determine the *nature* of it. The reſult was: The right, in the extent you aſſerted it, appeared to be of the *ſame nature* with that which the church of *Rome* claims, and which every conſiſtent proteſtant diſclaims.

WHAT you can mean, therefore, by ſaying, that I "go on to enquire into the tendency of *your* reaſonings on the nature "and extent of the right itſelf," I am at a loſs to know. Nor leſs perplexing is the remainder of this ſentence, *viz.* "not as "proved by this particular argument, which "you undertake to examine, but by this, "or by any other argument whatſoever." —I am quite embarraſſed. I want your help to clear up the difficulty. I would *ſpend eight pages* to find out your meaning. But I remember the ill ſucceſs which attended my ſearch for your meaning on a former occaſion, and I ſhall not ſoon forget the *cauſe* of it.

HAVING

HAVING thus, at ſome length, conſidered the truth, candour, conſiſtency and perſpicuity of what you have ſaid in the paſſage above tranſcribed, I now think myſelf at liberty to attend your reflections of *this kind* in a more brief manner.

ENQUIRING into the *extent* of the right you contend for, the EXAMINER remarked upon the indeterminate manner, in which you had expreſſed yourſelf, in aſſerting the ſame with reſpect to *ſome* confeſſion of faith and doctrines. This word, *ſome*, ſeemed to me to expreſs the extent in which you argued for the right of church-governours, in the caſe of ſubſcription, in ſo indefinite, indeterminate, and vague a manner, that I thought it neceſſary to collect your ſentiments on that head from other expreſſions, which were more definite and determinate. — But here again all my care and caution have ſerved but to give offence. In the following very polite terms you attempt to juſtify the perſpicuity of your language, and to expoſe the needleſs perplexity of the EXAMINER,

AMINER. "No very deep inſight into the "idiom of your mother tongue was neceſſa-"ry to diſcover, that I uſe the word, *ſome*, "here as an *indefinite*, not as a definite pro-"noun, to ſtate confeſſions *indeterminately*, "not to diſtinguiſh one ſort from another*." —I find you did, Sir. The caſe is juſt as you ſay. You uſed the word *indefinitely*, and not *definitively*. You ſtated confeſſions *indeterminately*; and you did not, in ſtating them, *diſtinguiſh* one ſort from another; which the EXAMINER was ſo unreaſonable as to wiſh had been done, lazy man! becauſe it would have ſaved him trouble. And, after all his perplexity and pains, it appeared through the medium of a little logic, that the word, *ſome*, muſt be meant full as *indefinitely* and without limitation to any particular ſort of confeſſions, as you would have it.

FROM this part of the EXAMINATION you ſkip at once to the end of it, to take notice of my having changed the word *an* into *any*. I did ſo, Sir. And what then?—If the

* 2 Vind. p. 5.

latter word expreſſeth your own meaning more clearly and fully than the former, the change is for the better. Can you ſay that your meaning is perverted by it? — One would expect, in objecting to me this change, that you would have complained of my miſrepreſenting your meaning. But this you have not done; becauſe you knew the complaint would be groundleſs. For the change was not made before it had been demonſtrated, that, by your reaſoning, you reſtricted the right of enjoining ſubſcription to no one particular confeſſion or one ſort of confeſſion, but extended it to *any* one, or any ſort of, confeſſion, which the church-governour ſhould *judge* proper to ſet forth.

You content yourſelf, therefore, with calling it "a *clumſy* buſineſs, that may poſ-"ſibly diſguſt *ſome* of my readers." How many of my readers this *clumſy* buſineſs of ſyllogyzing may have diſguſted, it is not quite ſo clear from this expreſſion of your's. The word, *ſome*, in this place, as before, has no fixed or determinate meaning. You

uſe

uſe it, I ſuppoſe, as "an *indefinite* not as a "*definitive* pronoun, to ſtate the number "of diſguſted readers *indeterminately*." However, as you ſeem to think, that I conſtrued this term, as applied to confeſſions, in too extenſive a ſenſe, I will be more moderate in applying it here, and ſuppoſe, that this ſyllogiſtic method may poſſibly have diſguſted only ſome *one* of my readers; but *what one* that may be, I think proper to imitate you, Sir, in leaving it *indeterminate*.

BUT here, Sir, permit me to expoſtulate with you a little, and to aſk you, Whether you can find, throughout the EXAMINATION, any ſuch rude and vulgar treatment, as this which I have received from you? — Where have I once reflected on your authorſhip? — And, if you could name the place, I will engage it ſhall not appear under ſuch coarſe terms. Or, ſhould I in this letter retort theſe unpolite reflections, and pick out from the SECOND VINDICATION ſome ſentence, as a fit ſubject for calling it a

"clumſy

"clumſy buſineſs," and repreſenting the VINDICATOR, as hardly acquainted with the idiom of his mother tongue, what would you think of me, in point of common decency and good manners? — I will not ſeek for an expreſſion that may give the fitteſt occaſion for a return; for I mean not to return the rudeneſs at all, but only to expoſe it to your own view by the ſuppoſition of a retaliation. The very firſt ſentence in your letter will ſerve the purpoſe.

You begin — "Sir, in my diſcourſe, "which you undertake to examine, I "*prove* the right of church-governours, to "require the clergy to ſubſcribe to an "eſtabliſhed confeſſion, by *two* arguments" &c. &c. — On which you are to ſuppoſe me to remark as follows; *viz.* "This "clumſy buſineſs and *poſitive* aſſertion, that "you have *proved* your point, would have "been more properly placed towards the "end of, than at the very entrance on, "your defence. As it ſtands, it cannot "convince your readers of the truth of

"your

"your reaſoning, while it may poſſibly "*diſguſt ſome* of them, either with the poſi- "tivity expreſſed in it, or with the little "acquaintance it ſhews you to have with "the *idiom of your mother tongue.*"—Had I begun my letter thus and continued writing to you in this ſtrain, I ſhould deſerve, in your next, not worſe language, indeed, than you have uſed in your laſt. I fancy, however, you would not heſitate to conclude me *one* of your *diſguſted* readers.

BUT ſee, ſir, how different a treatment you may expect from your preſent correſpondent, ſhould he be inclined to continue the correſpondence. To one, who could have made the rude remark above ſuppoſed, I would have obſerved, by way of apology for you (and I could have done it ſincerely, as I believe it to be the caſe) — that the PROFESSOR meant not to be *poſitive* in the affair, as if the queſtion was already decided by the irrefragable force of his reaſoning, but only to remind the reader, that he had made uſe of *two* arguments to prove his poſition

poſition — that the ſtreſs ſhould be laid not upon the word, *proving*, but upon the number of arguments produced, which was *two*; whereas the EXAMINER had only conſidered *one* of them — that, though the VINDICATOR had uſed the word, *prove*, which, in our language, ſignifies, to eſtabliſh a propoſition by *certain* and *infallible* arguments, yet it was plain from the turn and general tenour of the paſſage, that he meant no more by it in this place, than if it had been expreſſed more ſoftly and modeſtly thus, "I have *attempted to* prove by "two arguments" — that his readers, therefore, were unreaſonably *diſguſted*, if diſguſted, with the poſitive manner of expreſſion, which appears to be accidental rather than deſigned.

AND, as to the diſguſt which the too nice and delicate remarker might have conceived at your uſing the word ſo *improperly*, I would endeavour to remove it, by ſhewing him; — that he could not juſtly attribute ſuch an uſe of this term to the PRO-

FESSOR's

FESSOR's ignorance of the idiom of his *mother tongue*, as it might be well, and more honourably for the writer, accounted for on another principle — that the term, *probo*, from whence our engliſh word, *prove*, was ſo familiar to the PROFESSOR *e cathedrâ*, that the ſubſtitution of the one for the other, in point of ſenſe, (the terms ſo alike in ſound too) is not only quite excuſable, but ſhews in what ſenſe he intended it ſhould be taken, *viz.* undoubtedly in the ſenſe of the original, which is not, *to prove*, but, *to try*, or *examine*. The whole proceſs elſe of a *divinity act* would be confounded. For any one knows, that knows any thing of *that* matter, that the queſtion muſt be decided in favour of the *reſpondent*. Yet the *opponent*, producing his arguments *e contra*, always makes uſe of the word, *probo*: Properly: for he does not mean by it, "*I prove* to the contrary of your poſi-"tion," but only, "I *try*, or *examine* your "queſtion" by ſuch an argument: And, when he has tried it by ſeveral arguments of the ſame caſt, and tried it in vain (for the

the *reſpondent* ſtands up there ſtock-proof againſt them all) then he tries it by an argument of a different complexion, uſhered in with, *probo aliter*. So that this inſtance of inaccuracy, with reſpect to the idiom of our language, is too trifling to argue from *thence* the PROFESSOR's ignorance of his mother-tongue. —In ſome ſuch way as this, ſir, I ſhould be candid enough to defend you, and account for any little inelegancies of this ſort, without picking them out and ſeeking an advantage from them to obſcure the general and prevailing elegance, both of ſtyle and manner, which ſo much adorns your compoſitions.

"BUT let us go on, you ſay, with our "enquiry." — Pray, Sir, when did you *begin* it? — You have been hitherto ſo much employed in caſting reflection and pecking at ſuch ſuppoſed blemiſhes in the EXAMINATION as, if real, are foreign to the ſubject, that you have loſt ſight of your buſineſs. Give me leave to remind you of it. The EXAMINER has charged you with reaſoning

ſoning on principles inconſiſtent with thoſe of the reformation. Your buſineſs was to refute the charge. Have you yet attempted it? — You have not. And what you now obſerve relative to it is nothing like an *argument* in refutation of the charge, but appears more in the form of a *conceſſion*.

AFTER a careful examination of your manner of reaſoning, I had obſerved, that the confeſſion, to which you contend that church-governours have a right to enjoin ſubſcription, is *ſuch* an one as they ſhall *pleaſe* to enjoin; that, though it ſhould happen to be, in many articles, — very *unſcriptural*, yet it is enough, that it is ſcriptural in *their opinion*; if you will, in their *judgement*; nay, to let you ſee, that I ſeek not any advantage from a mere word, *to the beſt* of their judgment. In ſhort, I obſerved, that *they* are by you made the only judges of *orthodoxy*; and, therefore, have an *unlimited* right of requiring of their clergy ſubſcription to the eſtabliſhed confeſſion.

NOW, let us ſee whether in your SECOND VINDICATION you confine this right of

church-governours within narrower limits than their *own judgement*? — Whether you do not allow it to extend to *any* confeſſion, which *they* judge or *believe* to be ſcriptural? — Your words are: "A right of requiring ſubſcription to an eſtabliſhed confeſſion, when it is deduced from the duty "of church-governours to take care, that "the inſtructions, delivered to the people "of their own church by the public paſtors "and teachers of it, ſhould be agreeable "to the truth of the goſpel, is *limited* by "this principle to *ſuch* a confeſſion *only*," as what? — "as thoſe governours, according to the beſt of their judgement, *believe* "to contain the faith and doctrines, which "were taught mankind by Christ and his "apoſtles*." What a limitation is this! Their right extends no farther than to *ſuch* a confeſſion *only*, as *they believe* to be ſcriptural. Pray, Sir, does the church of *Rome*, in matters of faith and doctrine, carry her claim over *her* clergy any farther?—Does ſhe require their ſubſcription to any other confeſſion, than *ſuch* an one as *ſhe judges* to be perfectly

* 2 Vind. p. 7.

ſound,

ſound, ſaving and orthodox?—Does the POPE pretend —? But why mention I the pretenſions of the POPE? — They affect not you in the leaſt. This ſame POPE, when held up in all his authority over both his clergy and laity, regarding theſe matters of faith and doctrines, is, in your eſtimation, "a "mere *bugbear*, which may frighten chil-"dren, but which men of common ſenſe "will laugh at." Excuſe my weakneſs, Sir, but I am really frightened at your intrepidity. Can you ſo unconcernedly contemplate that *monſtrum horrendum*, which frightened all the children of the reformation? — If his *doctrines* be rather ridiculous than damnable, yet I ſhould have thought, that his *pretenſions to power* might be conſidered by you as of a more ſerious nature, as well as much more extenſive and exorbitant, than you ſeem to apprehend them. I little expected, when I had expoſed your principles of reaſoning, as tending to juſtify the pretenſions of the POPE himſelf, to be told, that "the pretenſions "of this ſame POPE" are not ſo very exorbitant

bitant as I have repreſented them to be: that I have uſed *artifice* in picturing this MAN OF SIN; who, however, to "men of com-"mon ſenſe, who cannot but ſee through "my artifice," is not ſo very frightful; that "I ſhall find his pretenſions to lie *within a* "*very narrow compaſs*," reduced thereto by the VINDICATOR's reaſonings. But I will tranſcribe this remarkable paſſage. For, without quoting your very words, it would be unreaſonable to expect credit in ſo improbable a repreſentation of your ſentiments.

YOUR words are: — "You will find, "that the pretenſions of this ſame pope, "who is, when held up as you hold him up "here*, a *bugbear*, which may frighten

* It is proper to let your readers ſee *how* I hold him up here, that they may judge whether I have uſed *artifice*. My words are as follow: "Doth the church of *Rome* "ſet forth the damnable doctrines of tranſubſtantiation, "purgatory, praying to ſaints, with a monſtrous heap of "other abſurdities, contradictions and ſuperſtitions, to "be taught by the clergy, and to be believed and prac-"tiſed by the people? — She hath good right to enjoin "them all, in an *eſtabliſhed* confeſſion of faith and doc-"trines, to be ſubſcribed by all thoſe that are deſirous of "preaching the goſpel, and to be a rule of faith and "practice to the laity. It matters not that they are cal-

children,

"children, but which men of common "ſenſe, who cannot but ſee through your "*artifice*, will laugh at, are reduced by my "principles and reaſonings within a *very* "narrow compaſs*."—*Euge* VINDICATOR! —There is no arguing againſt *fact*, I own, Sir. And, if you can make it appear that his HOLINESS, ſince your firſt VINDICATION was written, has actually lowered his pretenſions and *narrowed* his claim of power, I will diſmiſs the formidable idea I have of POPERY. I will acknowledge the exactneſs of your reaſonings, and will engage to meaſure church-power for the future by your ſcale of principles. But, as I cannot ſuppoſe your book to have had an effect ſo conſequential to all Chriſtendom,

"ed *damnable* doctrines, by thoſe that are without the "pale of that church; or, that they be thought ſo by "numbers of the laity *profeſſedly* of that church; or, "indeed, that they are *damnable* in themſelves, polluting "the fountain of life, making the word of GOD ſerve a "lye and deluſion, and turning the grace of the goſpel "into the hardeſt bondage — ſo long as the POPE, the "*church-governour*, *judges* them to be ſcriptural and ſav-"ing doctrines."

* 2 Vind. p. 20.

I remain

I remain poſſeſſed of the idea, that the pretenſions of this ſame Pope are very exorbitant.

It is more to be regretted, however, than to be wondered at, that they appear not in the ſame light to one that can ſeriouſly avow, that the governours of our church hold both clergy and laity to be *bound*, in conſcience, to believe and practiſe whatever is contained in the eſtabliſhed confeſſion. Continue not to vindicate the ſhameful principle. Venture to diſavow it. Say, you was not aware of the extenſive conſequence of ſuch an aſſertion; that you meant not to approach ſo near the confines of the church of *Rome*; that, by declaring every *layman*, who aſſents not to every article of our eſtabliſhed confeſſion, a violator of his conſcience, you did not apprehend, that you gave the papiſt the advantage of arguing upon your own principle againſt our original ſeparation from his church; in a word, that you are willing and ready to retract what you have declared, finding that you have expreſſed yourſelf rather unguardedly and beſide your intention.

You

You may think this *retractation* ſomewhat aukward. Perhaps you found it too hard of digeſtion. But you might have ſeen, that you had to deal with one, who would have ſcorned to take the leaſt advantage of an expreſſion againſt your meaning; who, though he thought it incumbent upon him, in this day of danger from the efforts of popery, to expoſe the tendency of your reaſoning, expreſſed, at the ſame time, his hope, nay, aſſured himſelf, that you *meant* not to carry the claim of church-power to the pitch your argument had raiſed it. You might have aſſured yourſelf of meeting, at leaſt, with no inſult from the EXAMINER, on the ingenuous conceſſion. And, if I know my own heart, I ſhould have felt, for the freedom I took with your argument, ſome regret mixed with the perfect conſciouſneſs of my honeſt views in taking it.

BUT, when you are hardy enough to avow the ſentiment, that not only the ſubſcribing clergy, but the whole body of the laity are *bound*, in conſcience, to believe and practiſe

practiſe whatever is ſet forth by the church-governours;—when, after ſuch a *pretenſion* to the power of judging the conſciences of all diſſenters from the eſtabliſhment, has been ſhewn to bear ſo near an affinity to the *pretenſions* of the POPE himſelf, inſtead of attempting to vindicate your ſentiments from ſuch an imputation, you appear unconcerned at it, as no ſuch diſcreditable matter;—when you can tell me quite coolly, that "the pretenſions of this ſame pope are "reduced by ſuch principles and reaſon-"ings within a *very narrow* compaſs:" I ſay, ſir, when, inſtead of diſproving or even denying the charge of ſuch principles and ſuch reaſonings, you dare to avow *them* and the *pretenſions* that are founded on them, as very moderate and reaſonable, I know not how to think that which I was inclined to think of your church principles. I would be candid where it is poſſible in the conſtruction of your meaning. In this inſtance more eſpecially I have laboured to give ſome favourable meaning, ſomething of a *proteſtant* caſt, to your words; but without ſucceſs. Might you not be underſtood, in

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obſerving that "the pope's pretenſions were "reduced by your principles and reaſonings "within a very narrow compaſs," as only aſſerting, that the POPE would, *if* guided by your principles and reaſonings (which were contrary to his) reduce his pretenſions from their preſent exorbitancy within a much narrower compaſs, than they are?—If this interpretation of your words could be allowed, although they would ſtill contain but a bare aſſertion, without any proof of the moderation of your pretenſions to church-power, yet it would ſhew that you was not quite indifferent to the charge of reaſoning on the very ſame principle with the papiſt, in reſpect of eſtabliſhed confeſſions, and the obligation to aſſent to them. But this interpretation favourable for yourſelf would be incompatible with that charity you expreſs in this ſame ſentence for his HOLINESS, concerned at my exaggeration of his pretenſions and unchriſtian-like artifice in holding him up as a frightful monſter.

WELL, ſir, you have a right to be underſtood in the ſenſe, in which you have ſo fully explained yourſelf. But, whether it

is ſo conſiſtent in a *proteſtant* divine to *entertain* ſuch favourable ſentiments of the POPE's pretenſions, or ſo creditable for him to *avow* them, I would have you to reflect upon it. I muſt obſerve, however, that whatever credit I may have loſt on the other hand *, *viz.* "by carrying the judge-"ment and claim of the people too far, — "who are not always, you obſerve, (and "think you have ſcripture for it too) the "propereſt judges for *themſelves*," this is not a time, in which you can expect thanks from any denomination of ſincere *proteſtants* for ſuch a repreſentation of papal power — A time, when POPERY is making her approaches almoſt in form upon us. For ſo we are given to underſtand in two *different* ways; by *complaints* of her from one quarter (thoſe weak children, I ſuppoſe, that are ſoon frightened at the *bugbear*) by encomiums on our complaiſance towards her from another quarter (thoſe men of common ſenſe, I ſuppoſe, who can laugh at the *bugbear*, or paſs by it, *without obſervation* and *without offence* †.)

* 2 Vind. p. 11. † Vid. Confeſſional, pref. p. 37-67. See alſo anſwer to Dr. Mahew's Obſervations.

BESIDES,

BESIDES, Sir, admitting that the EXAMINER is juſtly accuſed by you of having been too ſevere in his deſcription of this ſpiritual prince of darkneſs, and declaiming with ſome exaggeration againſt his power within his own juriſdiction, yet the accuſation does not juſtify *your* principles and reaſonings. If I did uſe a little *artifice* in magnifying the terrors that encircle this MAN OF SIN, in the exerciſe of his authority; does it make *your* claim of church-power appear the more reaſonable, to tell me, that you are among thoſe men of *common ſenſe*, who can ſee through my artifice, and are not to be frightened, like a child, at a mere bugbear. It would have been more creditable for your principles, if you had not diſcovered my *artifice* againſt the POPE, but ſuffered his pretenſions to be conſidered in the formidable light, in which I had *holden them up*; to have contraſted *your* pretenſions to church-power with *his*, and have ſhewn within how much narrower a compaſs your own lay.

THIS was your buſineſs. This would have been to your credit, as a proteſtant; and,

and, if you could have done it, it would have effectually refuted the EXAMINER who undertook to ſhew, that you have claimed in behalf of the governours of our own or any other proteſtant church, as much power over their clergy and laity, as the pope himſelf. But be ingenuous, Sir. Was not the caſe thus? — You was puſhed by the EXAMINER to the very gate of popery. *There* you was to make your ſtand and defend your principle, as you could. It was become the ſame thing, which you ſhould attempt to juſtify; the pretenſions of the POPE or your own.

BUT, I come now to ſpeak to that difference between the power of the church of *Rome* and that of a *proteſtant* church which you charge me with having overlooked and would remind me of. "Different churches you ſuppoſe to be under "different governours, and this right to "belong independently to each of them: "which ſuppoſition, you ſay, implies, "that the claim of the governours, or go-"vernour, of any one church to a ſupre-"macy over *all* is a mere uſurpation *." —

* 2 Vind. p. 20.

Very

Very true; it doth ſo. And what then?—The Examiner never charged you with contending for the Pope's *ſupremacy* over *all* churches. Let me remind *you*, that you are ſhifting the queſtion here. The queſtion is not about the power of one church over *all* other churches; but whether you have not contended for the governours of our own or any other proteſtant church, having a right, in matters of faith and conſcience, to as great a power in the *particular church* over which they preſide, as the Pope of *Rome* claims over *papiſts*;—whether the governours of proteſtant churches can, conſiſtently with their principles, exerciſe within their *reſpective* churches, all the power, which the church of *Rome* exerciſes, in matters of faith and conſcience, over *her* members. There was no occaſion, therefore, to remind me of what you have ſaid of the Pope's *ſupremacy* over *all* churches. It was not to my purpoſe to take notice of it. I examined into the nature and extent of the right you contended for, in favour of the governours of every particular church. And it appeared to be a right,

a right, to require the clergy to ſubſcribe to whatever confeſſion of faith and doctrines they [the church governours] ſhould judge proper to ſet forth, and to propoſe the ſame to be believed and practiſed by the laity, judging them to be *bound* in conſcience ſo to believe and practiſe.

Now "this right, you remind me, be-"longs independently to each governour." Both the clergy and laity of any particular church are bound in conſcience to believe all thoſe articles, which the governour of that church ſets forth. Do you not bluſh, Sir, at the conſequence in view? The reformation from popery is unjuſtifiable. The reformers and king Henry himſelf were bound in conſcience to believe and practiſe whatever was contained in the eſtabliſhed confeſſion of that church, of which they were once members. The Pope, their church-governour, in conſidering them as *bound*, in conſcience, to believe and practiſe every thing ſet forth by the authority of the church, arrogated to himſelf no greater authority over *them*, than that which you ſuppoſe our church-governours have a right to exerciſe

exerciſe over the members of *our* church. Did not the reformers then violate their conſciences in breaking from the church, and believing and practiſing things contrary to thoſe which, on your principle, they were *bound*, in conſcience to believe and practiſe?—

YOU cannot ſay, that the POPE, in this caſe, exerciſed this power, of *judging the conſciences of men*, over members of "a ſe-"parate church," that had a governour of their own. For they had then no other viſible church-governour than the POPE.—See, Sir, what becomes of your principle, that the *laity*, as well as the ſubſcribing clergy, are *bound* in conſcience, to believe and practiſe whatever is ſet forth in an eſtabliſhed confeſſion of faith. The principle is of the very ſpirit and genius of POPERY; and your diſtinction, of the power being lodged in every *particular* governour of a "ſeparate church," does not reduce the *power itſelf* within narrower limits, while it encreaſes the number of POPES.

BUT you are not content with having pleaded the cauſe of *all* church-governours, with reſpect to this ſpiritual dominion over

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the clergy and laity. You are for giving this power to every private clergyman over the laity of his own parish; nay, over whomsoever he may be authorized to address from the pulpit. Thus you go on improving, in this SECOND VINDICATION, upon the excellent position laid down in your FIRST. I wonder how much further you would carry it, if you had encouragement to write a THIRD. How considerably you have improved upon it already, the following view of this matter will sufficiently demonstrate.

"IF the people (the EXAMINER had observed*) *may*, in case of a conscientious "dissent, seek other instruction than that "which is provided for them, they *ought* "not. For the PROFESSOR ventures to assert, that *the governours of the church*, "*though they do not bind the laity to subscribe* "*to the established confession*, yet *understand* "*them to be* bound in conscience, *as much as* "*the clergy, to believe and practise what is* "*contained in it*†." — To shew the reasonableness of this assertion you make the following appeal to the EXAMINER:

* Examination, p. 25, 26.

† Charge, p. 14.

"YOU

"You, Sir, are a clergyman. You "preach to the laity in your pariſh: and, "perhaps, you may ſometimes preach in "your turn to the clergy at a *Viſitation*. "Suppoſe now, that you were at liberty to "deliver to both whatever doctrine you "thought proper; and were not confined "at all by any ſubſcription, you would, I "preſume, deliver ſuch doctrine, extracted, "according to the beſt of your judgement, "from the ſcriptures, and expreſſed in plain "and determinate language, as you under-"ſtood your hearers, whether *laity* or *cler-"gy*, to be *bound in conſcience* to believe and "practiſe*."

You *preſume* I ſhould do this. You are miſtaken, Sir. I ſhould deliver ſuch doctrines to them as *I*, in my conſcience, believed to be agreeable to the word of GOD. But I ſhould not "underſtand *them* to be "bound in conſcience to believe" what I told them. So far from it, that I ſhould "underſtand them to be bound" to *try* and *examine* the doctrines delivered, every man for himſelf, as far as he had opportunity and

* 2 Vindication, page 16,

ability. I preach to them my real ſentiments of ſuch and ſuch doctrines. Nevertheleſs, how can I know and conſider myſelf to be fallible, and yet judge them, every man, whether *clergy* or *laity*, to be bound in conſcience to believe as I do? — Though I have uſed my beſt judgement in explaining to them ſome paſſage of ſcripture, relating, for inſtance, to the doctrine of the TRINITY, the *incarnation*, the *atonement*, the *ſtate of the ſoul on death*; or, if you will, at a *Viſitation*, ſome text relating to our preſent enquiry concerning *church-authority*, its nature and bounds; I may yet be, as many divines have been on ſuch ſubjects, miſtaken, and may deliver a doctrine contrary to the word of GOD. Are my hearers, whether clergy or laity, *bound* in conſcience to believe it, becauſe it was ſcriptural according to the beſt of *my* judgement? — I will anſwer plainly; though, in your opinion, by ſo doing I make a great venture of my credit with church-governours. I ſhould *not* underſtand the laity *themſelves* to be ſo *bound*. If I did, I could, with no reaſon, object the principle to you. Since

" I ſhould

"I ſhould do, as a private clergyman, the "very ſame thing in my diſcourſes, which "is *popiſh tyranny*, when you ſuppoſe it to "be done by church-governours in an eſta-"bliſhed confeſſion*."

HOWEVER, you think that I might ſafely do it, and without the imputation of affecting ſpiritual tyranny. If it ſhould be objected to me, as I had objected to church-governours, claiming a right of drawing up an eſtabliſhed confeſſion of faith and doctrines on *this principle*, you could thus apologize for me; *viz.* "The beſt *excuſe* [it ſeems I ſhould want an excuſe then] which "I could think of for *you*, would be the "ſame which I offer for *them*; that you "endeavour to diſcharge your duty conſci-"entiouſly; that, though you preach ſuch "doctrines, as every chriſtian, according to "the beſt of your judgement, is *bound* in "conſcience to aſſent to, and make uſe of "ſuch words and phraſes as appear to you "moſt expreſſive of the true meaning of "the ſcriptures, from which you extract "thoſe doctrines, and leaſt likely to be miſ-

* 2 Vind. p. 16.

"underſtood,

"understood, yet, as you know your "judgement to be at best but fallible, "when you have done this, you leave every "man to judge and determine for himself, "whether those doctrines are such as he "ought to assent to or not. You would be "likely enough to accept of this apology "for *your own* conduct; though you will "not allow it to be a sufficient justification "of what I have supposed *church-govern-* "*ours* to do *." — Accept of this apology, Mr. PROFESSOR!—I reject it with indignation and with horror. — With indignation, that you think me capable of accepting so *weak* an apology for so great presumption. For, can any thing be conceived to be more weak than to profess, that "I leave every "man to judge and determine for himself, "whether those doctrines are such as he "ought to assent to *or not*," at the same time that I *judge* him to be bound in conscience to *assent* to them? — With horror I reject your apology, to find a professed protestant, a divine of the church of *England*, pleading for such a conduct and offering such an apology for it.

* 2 Vind. p. 17.

AND

AND give me leave, Sir, now to call upon *you* with ſomething of the ſame freedom that you have called upon the EXAMINER.—You, Sir, are a clergyman. You preach to the laity in your pariſh. You ſometimes deliver a CHARGE to your clergy at a *Viſitation*: and you *may, perhaps, ſometimes*, give a lecture in divinity to ſuch gentlemen as are qualifying themſelves, in your UNIVERSITY, for the church. Suppoſe now, "that, in theſe ſeveral departments, "you were at liberty to deliver to all, both "clergy and laity, whatever doctrine you "pleaſed, to preach and to teach ſuch divi-"nity as you thought proper, unconfined "by any ſubſcription;" you would, I really believe, Sir, deliver ſuch doctrine, as *you judged* to be ſcriptural. But would you underſtand them all, as well clergy as laity, to be bound in conſcience to believe every thing that you taught?—Yes truly; You are bold to profeſs you would underſtand them to be ſo bound.

WHAT then, if the writer of the CONFESSIONAL, who *may* be a clergyman, and, for aught I know, an ARCHDEACON, has addreſſed

addreſſed to the clergy of *his* archdeaconry thoſe ſentiments concerning church-authority, which you have thought proper to impugn in a charge to the clergy of *your* archdeaconry? — Both of you I will ſuppoſe to have uſed your beſt judgements in ſearching for the true ſcripture doctrine on this head, and to deliver ſuch ſentiments only as you *believe* to be ſcriptural. How are your reſpective clergy to judge in this matter?—Why, according to you, the clergy in one archdeaconry are bound in conſcience to believe what the writer of the CONFESSIONAL teaches concerning eſtabliſhed confeſſions of faith and doctrines. The clergy in the other archdeaconry are bound in conſcience to believe juſt the contrary. For the archdeacon of *Eſſex* delivered in his charge ſuch doctrines only as he underſtood his hearers, whether clergy or laity, to be *bound in conſcience* to believe and practiſe.

THUS, Sir, by attempting to illuſtrate the reaſonableneſs of this poſition of yours by the ſuppoſed conduct of every private clergyman, you have but ſo much the more

expoſed

expoſed it. You would have left it with more *conſiſtency* in the poſſeſſion of church-governours with whom alone, in your firſt VINDICATION, you had lodged it. But ſuch a poſition can appear no where upon earth ſo *conſiſtent* as in the church of *Rome*. *There* let it remain. Let us not rob her of her pretenſions. Give her back whole and entire that claim to an infallible authority, in matters of faith and doctrine, which you would have ſeparate churches to ſhare with her. Be not forward to conteſt with her a claim, which cannot be pleaded for by you, either with conſiſtence, or with credit to the eſtabliſhment to which you belong.

AND think you, Sir, *thus* to keep in high credit with the governours of our church? —You ſeem to expect you will. This appears not more from your zealous contention for the extent of their right, in the caſe of ſubſcription, than from the diſheartening preſage you have uttered againſt the imprudent EXAMINER, as having loſt his credit with *them* by carrying the claim of

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the *laity* too far *. Unkind Sir! Could you not have enjoyed your own bright expectations from that quarter, without inſulting the EXAMINER on his more humble hopes? — But for yourſelf, Sir; you have miſſed the mark, I think. Your zeal is not likely to pleaſe, which will be ſure, if ſuffered to continue burning at this rate, to light a zeal of another ſort, and occaſion, perhaps, in *ſome* an officiouſneſs of enquiry into theſe matters, which may be conducted with leſs decency than has been ſhown by the EXAMINER.

IF I ſhould be miſtaken, however, and your zeal be found acceptable to thoſe, whom it appears to me more likely to offend, unenvied be your credit with them and the ſplendid effects of it; well content for myſelf, if I can be allowed, through the mildneſs of government and under the moſt gracious PRINCE, to avow and promote thoſe principles of Chriſtian liberty, on which the reformation began, and on which principles a *farther* reformation in *ſome* proteſtant churches (take what um-

* 2 Vind. p. 11.

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brage you pleaſe at my words, but remember I ſpeak *indefinitely)* is much to be wiſhed for.

BUT may heaven defend our church from that wild kind of reformation, which the principle you firſt argued upon and do now avow, would entitle it to begin! Whatever change our church-governours pleaſe to make, in matters of faith and doctrine, they have, on *your principle*, a right to make it, and it ought to be ſubmitted to. Quakeriſm, preſbyterianiſm, antinomianiſm, methodiſm, behmeniſm, quietiſm and what not, may be eſtabliſhed by turns without any inconſiſtency. Inſtead of the doctrine of the holy and *undivided* TRINITY, as now ſet forth in our church, we may have one ſet forth with a *diviſion* of the godhead, in an *Arian* form. Inſtead of being taught, as in the very firſt article, that God is a ſpirit, "*without body*, "*parts or paſſions*," we may be enjoined to believe and to teach "the converſion of "the godhead into fleſh," the paſſeity of the divine nature, and to repreſent the *bleſſed* God himſelf as having *ſuffered*

excruciating pains on the croſs. In ſhort; all the articles of our church may be changed and reverſed too on *your principle*. Yes, Sir: All this may be done on your principle, which makes the governours of every particular church the *judges* of what every perſon, clergyman or layman, is bound in conſcience to believe and practiſe. For, though they judge at preſent the eſtabliſhed doctrines of the church of *England* to be truly ſcriptural, yet, according to your reaſoning, "they may change them "without any inconſiſtency. It is no more "neceſſary, that a *proteſtant* church, than "that an individual proteſtant, ſhould al-"ways maintain the ſame doctrines*." So you ſay. — I am of opinion, however, that it is neceſſary for a *proteſtant* church, as *ſuch*, *always* to maintain one doctrine at leaſt, which the church of *England* at preſent maintains, and, I hope, *never* will part with; "*Holy ſcripture containeth all things* "*neceſſary to ſalvation: ſo that, whatſoever* "*is not read* THEREIN, *nor may be proved* "THEREBY, *is* NOT *to be required of* ANY

* Charge, p. 18.

"*man*,

"*man, that it ſhould be believed as an article*
"*of the faith, or be thought requiſite or ne-*
"*ceſſary to ſalvation**."

BUT, Sir, you have drawn me out farther than I at firſt propoſed to follow. I was willing to pay my reſpects to you in this way, the correſpondence having been tendered on your part. This done, you muſt excuſe my diſcontinuing it, *till* you have replaced the queſtion on its proper hinge, off which, in your SECOND VINDICATION, you have manifeſtly thrown it. In ſearch of *truth*, or to defend it, I will correſpond with you as long as you pleaſe, yielding only to conviction. But, now the matter is become a mere conteſt of abilities, I find no reluctance in yielding, in *that* point, to Dr. RUTHERFORTH.

I am, Sir,

Your's, &c.

* Vide Article VI.

F I N I S.

MVSEVM
BRITAN
NICVM